



SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

The e-Bulletin is a monthly informal communique to persons registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions and other stakeholders.

September 2019

From the desk of the Registrar



This month I continue with part 2 of the series on ethics and general responsibilities for social service practitioners.

I remember all the children and women of South Africa who were senselessly killed in acts of violence, especially gender-based violence during the month of August. The recent resurgence of gender-based violence targeting young female students has left me feeling that I have not done enough to contribute to preventing gender-based violence in our communities. When I read weekly about a father/ boyfriend who in a fit of rage kills his and her lover's children because the two of them have severe disconnection in their relationship, I realise that the situation demands that as social service practitioners we take deep pause and reflect on our interventions. It cannot be business as usual; we cannot pretend we do not see what is happening around us; we have to adapt to the social challenges in our communities and broader society; we need to promote more sustainable healthy intrapersonal and interpersonal human relationships.

Please allow me to deviate from what I committed to focus on in this eBulletin. Social workers, do you still remember the key functions of our practice which empowers us to intervene across all social systems? We have one goal- to assist individuals and groups to identify and resolve or minimize the problems that may arise out of an imbalance between themselves and the environment. It reminds me of the 'mantra' I learnt during my formative years as a social worker whilst employed at Wits Mental Health Society. Mental health is 1-2-3: (1) How you feel about yourself? (intrapersonal stuff) (2) How you feel about others (interpersonal stuff) (3) How you cope with the demands of your environment (work- life balance issues: personal pressures as only sibling who is a bread winner, an employee, a community leader, a parent, role model etc)

As social workers we must remember our fundamental generalist social work practice key functions- (a) restorative/curative/ remedial or rehabilitative function; (b) preventative function; and (c) developmental functions.

Child and youth care workers do you remember the five characteristic functions of your profession? Focus on the - (a) growth and development of children and youth; (b) totality of a child's functioning; (c) developmental social competence perspective to child development; (d) direct, day to day work with children and youth in their environment (life space interventions); and (e)

development of therapeutic relationships with children, their families and other formal and / or informal persons of significance.

I am raising the above because I believe (based on observation) that as social service practitioners we are failing in our duties because we are focussing on other unimportant issues than the core functions of our practice. I am stimulating all of you to introspect as to why we are falling short on our functions so that we can start to contribute meaningfully to combating the root causes of general violence gripping out country today, as well as gender based violence perpetrated especially against women and children.

Part three will address the ethical issues to consider when working with communities. The last part will look at the 4th industrial revolution and netiquette challenges.

Langi Malamba

RESOURCE Corner

This month we have a bumper edition of the resource corner to share with you various resources (obtained from the public domain) that deals with the issues of discipline and parenting – without violence.

FOR THOSE WORKING WITH PARENTS

Positive discipline for everyday parenting by Joan Durrant is a very useful resource and can be downloaded [here](#).

Two comics developed by our neighbours in Namibia on alternatives to corporal punishment. Download [Comic 1](#) & [Comic 2](#). Also download the one day training session on *Alternatives to corporal punishment* developed by the Legal Assistance Centre in Windhoek [here](#).

Pamphlet on *Alternatives to smacking children* can be downloaded [here](#).

Childrearing Without Violence: A Practical Guide for Families and Communities published by Save the Children is available [here](#).

A handbook on growing up without violence published by the Churches' Network for Non-violence is available [here](#).

Meet the Blobs is a cartoon activity book for children and parents and is available [here](#).

FOR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

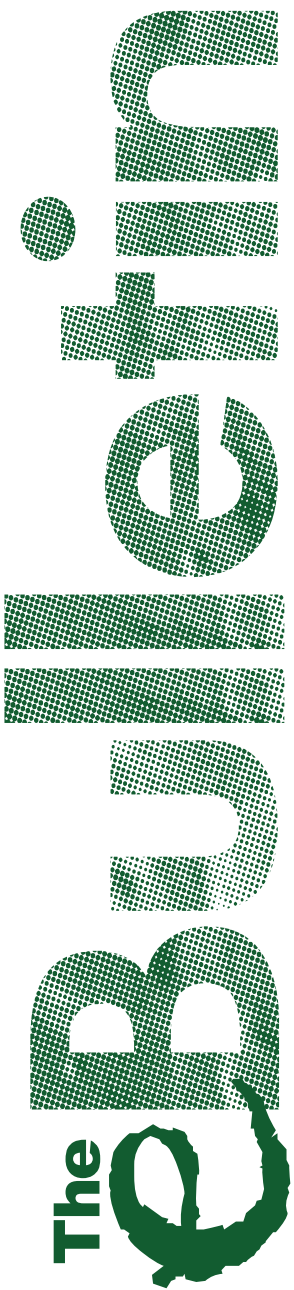
Submission by the *Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference Parliamentary Liaison Office on the use of corporal discipline* in the home is available [here](#).

A Theology of Children written by Rev Nove Vaillau and provides a theological context for positive parenting. You can find it [here](#).

The Churches' Network for Non-violence, the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children and Save the Children published *Ending corporal punishment of children – a handbook for multi-religious gatherings* (get it [here](#)) and *Ending corporal punishment of children – a handbook for working with religious communities* (get it [here](#)).

Quote for the month

My heritage is a huge part of everything I do; it is, after all, part of what has made me who I am - John Rocha



Contact us

SACSSP
Private Bag X12
Gezina, Pretoria 0031
37 Annie Botha Ave,
Riviera, Pretoria, 0084

- mail@sacssp.co.za
- 0123568300/21/02/03
- 012 356 8400
- www.sacssp.co.za
- @OfficialSACSSP
- @SACSSP1

3 questions to MERLE ALLSOPP

Member of the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work



Tell us who is Merle Allsopp the person?

I feel fortunate to have stumbled into child and youth care work – almost by mistake and found a passion for this way of working with people. Working in teams with other professionals who really care about others has been my greatest good fortune in life.

What is the biggest highlight in your career as a child and youth care worker?

Undoubtedly the biggest highlight has been seeing the achievement of the long quest to statutorily regulate child and youth care workers. Having been a small part of the process of achieving that, and getting the opportunity to work with so many revered South African social service professionals and international child and youth care workers has been an extraordinary blessing. Seeing too, the overwhelmingly positive response by the child and youth care field to being registered – seeing child and youth care workers taking their rightful, dignified place in the social service professions – has been most gratifying.

What is your vision for child and youth care work as a social service profession in the country?

I see our development trajectory resulting in child and youth care work becoming a household word – a career that is known and understood outside of the social development sector. To achieve this we need degree opportunities in child and youth care work, to break the glass ceiling in government employment situations, to have child and youth care workers properly remunerated, and to be working in varied settings.

LAW talk for social service professionals

This month we look at case law and why it is also important for social service professionals.

Case law refers to the past rulings made by courts or similar tribunals where the law was analysed and interpreted to decide on a specific case. The principle of state decisis meaning 'let the decision stand' is applied, which means that Courts have to take into account previous judgements in similar cases, because they are bound to the approach followed in the past. This is also referred to as the system of judicial precedent. The higher courts are able to overturn the decisions of a lower court and courts may choose to build onto an existing precedent, extending its scope and application.

Case law is also important for social service professionals as the decision is binding and becomes part of the legal framework of the country, unless the judgment directs otherwise. Therefore, knowledge of case laws and the implication of that on your practice is an essential part of your professional attire. A good example the recent judgment of the Constitutional Court that the common law defence of reasonable and moderate parental chastisement is unconstitutional. It impacts on professional practice and may require significant adjustments in practice, which may include parenting plans and programmes, diversion to early intervention programmes, amongst others. For example, as a social service professional you have a legal and ethical responsibility to inform parents of this judgment and guide them on other ways to discipline children. It also has an immediate impact on how you respond and manage reports of child abuse in terms of section 110(1) of the Children's Act 38 of 2005.

This is why it is important that not only the court take notice of case law, but social service professionals as well. It is part of being a professional in your field of work.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr Memory Mathe (10-27349) - 1980.07.23 - 2019.08.29: Dr Mathe senior lecturer in the Department of Social Work at (UNISA). She was involved as external expert in the work of Professional Board for Social Work as member of the CPD panel and assessment of the social auxiliary work learning material. She met her gruesome untimely death on 29 August 2019 in her home. Our hearts go out to her family, friends and colleagues during this difficult time.

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LOCAL & international NEWS

LANDMARK RULING BY CONCOURT

A landmark judgment for child rights in the country was handed down by the Constitutional Court on 18 September 2019 that the common law defence of reasonable and moderate parental chastisement is inconsistent with the provisions of sections 10, 12(1)(c), and 28(2) of the Constitution. This judgment follows a long history of advocacy nationally and internationally for the abolishment of corporal punishment in the home. When reading the judgment by the ConCourt, one should first start with the 2017 judgment (YG v the State) in the High Court of South Africa: Gauteng Local Division. You can download it [here](#).

Freedom of Religion South Africa decided to challenge this judgment by the High Court in the Constitutional Court. On 18 September 2019 the Constitutional Court dismissed the appeal, holding that the common law defence of reasonable and moderate parental chastisement is inconsistent with the provisions of sections 10, 12(1)(c), and 28(2) of the Constitution. The full judgment Freedom of Religion South Africa v Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development and Others [2019] ZACC 34. (Case CCT320/17). In the Constitutional Court of South Africa. (9 June 1995) can be downloaded [here](#).

It is worth the while reading these judgments in full.

You can also read the article that appeared in Council's Newsletter on the YG v the State judgment in 2017 [here](#).

RESOURCE

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The Kyoto Declaration - A Multi-Religious Commitment to Confront Violence against Children is available [here](#) and the discussion document [here](#).

From commitment to action: what religious communities can do to eliminate violence against children is a guide developed by UNICEF and Religions for Peace. It can be downloaded [here](#).

Guide Book on Children in Islam: Their Care, Protection and Development, by the International Islamic Centre for Demographic Studies and Research is available [here](#).

World religions and what they say about children and non-violence is a quick reference. Download your copy [here](#).

PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

Statement by international health organisations in support of prohibition and elimination of all corporal punishment of children ([download](#))

African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Statement on Violence against Children (2011) ([download](#))

Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 on The right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment ([download](#))

Prohibiting violent punishment of girls and boys – a key element in ending family violence ([download](#))

Prohibiting and eliminating all corporal punishment of children with disabilities ([download](#))

Corporal punishment of children: review of research on its impact and associations ([download](#))

What's on for social service professionals

1 October is International Day of Older Persons

20 November is Universal Children's Day and the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. More information is available [here](#).

SHARE your important date or event in this column by sending an email before the end of any month to: communications@sacssp.co.za